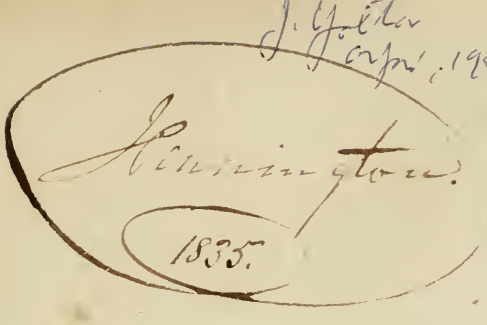
A. E. Haley.


J. Yeates
Capt. 1859
Kilmington
1835.

MENTAL PERCEPTIONS;

ILLUSTRATED BY THE

THEORY OF SENSATIONS.

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THEORY OF SENSATIONS.

INSCRIBED WITH PERMISSION TO, AND SPECIALLY PATRONISED BY

Her Royal Highness
THE DUCHESS OF YORK.

By SARAH FERRIS.

" So much the rather thou, celestial light,
" Shine inward, and the mind through all her pow'rs
" Irradiate, there plant sensations, that I may feel
" And tell thy pow'r and influence."——

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TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUCHESS OF YORK.

MADAM,

WITH the greatest deference and respect I look up to your Royal Highness as my protector, for in you I find the friend and patron of learning eminently conspicuous—a perfect model of greatness, virtue, and accomplishments.

The highest sense of pleasure must result from a knowledge of a patron being a competent judge of literature and science. I am well convinced your Royal Highness possesses every requisite that should adorn a mind expanded by general information, therefore I can with safety approach an exalted Personage, whose name gives lustre to every attempt to promote it.

The Work now presented to your Royal Highness, and which you are pleased to take under your royal protection, is a production

duction designed to amuse, and, I hope, instruct, the rising generation, in this age of deluded reason, infidelity, and deism, when vehicles of the vilest tendency gain patronage from an unsuspecting Public, and no discovery is made till the baneful influence is too deeply rooted to hope for any medium to eradicate the evil.

Men who pretend to teach the meek doctrines of the Gospel are busily employed in sowing the seeds of barren reason; and what their shallow minds cannot com-

prehend they maliciously brand with odium, to the decay of piety and every Christian virtue.

To arrest the attention of those who have not yet fixed on any criterion to rest their opinion is the avowed purpose of the Work your Royal Highness gives me the privilege of Dedication.

Curiosity is an incitement, and not unfrequently has had the desired effect, by bringing about occurrences not then in view, but as incidents rise out of each other,

other, and gradually gain ground and advantage the speculator.

That your Royal Highness may long continue to revolve in the circle in which God has placed you, and to diffuse happiness around you, is the ardent wish of,

MADAM,

Your Royal Highness's
Most humble and
Highly obliged Servant,

SARAH FERRIS.

PREFACE.

THE design of the following sheets is to discover the source and genuine standard of our several inclinations, pleasures, and duties, by which we obtain a key to the whole system of humanity and morals. Almighty God having endowed us with faculties corporeal as well as intellectual, in order

to

to promote our happiness, also vouchsafed to conduct us to this noble end, not only by the deductions of reason, but also by the force of instinct and sensation, a still more efficacious principle. Thus Nature, by a sensation of pain, instantly apprises us of what might prove hurtful; and, on the contrary, by an agreeable sensation gently leads us to whatever tends to the preservation of our beings, and the perfection or good state of our faculties, which are the two points on which our happiness depends. Our faculties can neither be of use, nor display themselves,

selves, farther than we exercise them. Motion or action is therefore so essentially necessary to us, that without it we must inevitably sink into a deplorable state of insensibility and languor. On the other hand, as we are weak and limited creatures, all excessive and violent action impairs and destroys our organs: we must therefore only use a moderate motion, since by this means the use or perfection of our faculties is reconciled with our first interest—that of self-preservation. Now it is to this happy medium that the Author of Nature has so wisely annexed pleasure.

Having

Having established this principle, I shall consider the various pleasures of the senses, those of the understanding, and those of the heart. I shall also distinctly account for every thing esteemed beautiful and agreeable in the works of Nature and Art, in countenances, in colours, in sounds—in the figure, proportion, symmetry, variety, and novelty of objects—in the tastes of every age, in language and stile—in the sciences, in the passions, in the motions of the soul—and, in a word, in every thing which is conducive to our real happiness.

I shall

I shall show that by these steps we easily ascend to a first intelligent and beneficent Cause, who has established this beautiful harmony, and given to us precisely that degree of sensibility which, considering every thing, was best suited to our wants and necessities.

I shall here make it my particular study to evince that we find our happiness in the practice of the several duties we owe to God, to our neighbour, and ourselves. Not content to stop here, I shall, by reasoning on the goods

and

and evils annexed to every condition, shew the pre-eminence of intellectual goods, and the advantages which every one may reap from a proper use of their faculties, so as to render life agreeable, and contribute to the public good by an uninterrupted series of rational occupations.

This short analysis will be sufficient to convince the Reader that the present Work contains the true principles of natural theology, of morality, of eloquence, and of taste, both with respect to the liberal arts, both of genius and of

of wit.—Here, in a particular manner, the Reader may learn the principal end of wisdom—the great art of rendering ourselves as happy as the frailty of our present condition will suffer us to be.

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INTRODUCTION.

CERTAINTY alone is not sufficient to make our knowledge valuable; it is the importance of our knowledge which gives a value to it; and surely there is none which more nearly concerns us than that which has for its object the very summum of all our desires. I am aware that an inquiry which is to entertain us only with abstract ideas will less concern us than that which promises us agreeable sensations: but it is not to the imagination that I propose to ad-

dress myself concerning pleasures; what I aim at is to explain the nature of pleasure. Those laws which regulate the rise of pleasure not a little resemble the course of the river Nile, which so enriches Egypt. We may be ignorant of those laws, and at the same time enjoy their benefits. The theory of sensation not only presents us with an object worthy of our highest attention, but likewise furnishes us with principles of arts which still more concern us.

Amongst all arts, there is surely none more interesting than that of procuring happiness; and there is no other, whose fundamental principle has given rise to a greater variety of opinions. It

is

is upon this principle that the whole of moral philosophy is built; in order to attain a clear idea of which, we must go up as far as the laws of sensation—we must draw nigh to them, and allow ourselves to be conducted by a thread of consequences. In Plato's dialogue upon a republic, or rather upon internal justice, some of his dialogists complain that law-givers and philosophers, in order to incite us to virtue, mention no other motive as an inducement than the consideration of those advantages which flow from it; therefore they require of Socrates to prove to them, that Virtue, by her own native charms, constitutes the happiness of those who have her in their possession.—This he does by a long comparison between

the different forms of government and that inward republic which is formed within us by our reason and passions.

This doctrine of the Platonic school may, as I apprehend, be very clearly established by the theory of sensations. Let us thoroughly examine this point, and we shall soon come at the principles of a most exact system of morality. We must acknowledge that an observance of the laws which our Creator has prescribed is the surest way to keep off uneasiness and anxiety, and to lay up in our minds a stock of the most valuable sensations.

There are Christians who imagine that the Gospel condemns virtue to be unhappy

unhappy in this life. The law of God, which, as set forth in the sacred writings, has of itself so many enticements, is to such persons an insupportable yoke. Were they to be once freed from that slavish dread with which they are fettered, then they would run out into the most enormous crimes. They are equally tortured by vice, which has the mastery of them, as they are by the fear of punishment, which frightens them.—It is not so with those, in whose hearts *perfect love casteth out fear;* they perceive no rigour in the Gospel or the Prophets. We are only commanded, according to Christ's own expression, to love God and our neighbour. And what is there in this that our reason can contradict? Ought not our heart

to go along with us, in being benevolent to our fellow-creatures, and in submitting to the decrees of a being of infinite wisdom?

In the order of nature, an exercise that is agreeable to our faculties is always attended with pleasing sensations. This source of lawful pleasures is open no less to the Christian than to the infidel: but in the order of grace, the Christian enjoys more happiness by what he hopes for, than by what he actually possesses. Raised on high upon the wings of faith, into the bosom of God himself, there he beholds an ever-flowing stream of delight; and when from this immense height he looks down upon the present advantages and misfortunes

misfortunes of this world, his only design or use of them is to facilitate the acquisition of that everlasting happiness which is offered.—The theory of sensations does not go so high; it is only a branch of natural philosophy, though one of the most important. It displays to us the wisdom and goodness of our Creator; it assigns to the goods of this life the proper class in which each of them is to be placed; it supports most of the Gospel maxims, contradicts none of them, and invites us to the practice, by showing that there is even in this life a real pleasure which accompanies the performance of our duty towards God, ourselves, and our fellow-creatures. The more important this point is, the less susceptible it is of

shining discoveries. What can be said new upon a subject, which ever since the origin of mankind has been the perpetual object of the desires of the heart, and the reflexions of the mind?

MENTAL PERCEPTIONS,

&c. &c. &c.

THERE are some animated beings which seem to be sufficient of themselves. In the very spot where they are placed they find every thing necessary for their preservation and growth. It is not so with man: there are no bounds to the immensity of his desires. He is overwhelmed with wants, to supply which all nature seems hardly sufficient; at the same time he is enriched with variety of organs, which

enable him to approach the most distant objects, to distinguish, lay hold, and make use of them. Whatever causes a moderate exercise to these organs is accompanied with an agreeable sensation. That restless disposition which we observe in children shows what a pleasing thing motion must be to them. Even old persons, in whom age has blunted every other sort of sensation, are pleased with moderate exercise.

Some people imagine that the fondness which men show for all sorts of diversions and exercises arises from a desire which they have to shun themselves, or avoid their own company; but in my opinion it proceeds from that pleasure

pleasure which accompanies the exercise of our different faculties; and though this pleasure may make but very little impression, it is not, for that reason, the less real. Is it not a very common thing to see women, in order to drive away melancholy, employ themselves in some slight work, by which they propose no other advantage but the amusement?

The principle of this pleasure consists in the organs of transpiration. There are certain vapours not to be seen by our eyes, which are continually exhaled through the pores of the skin. Were these to remain too long in the blood, they would soon give a shock to our health. Besides, the want of exercise,

or immoderate exercise, equally diminish this invisible exhalation: on the other hand, an exercise that is suited to our strength very much contributes to health.

It is likewise owing to this motion of the organs of transpiration that the warmth of a fire is so agreeable to us in winter, and the cooling breezes so refreshing in summer; and what promotes the circulation of the blood gives a grateful pleasure. When we survey an object, the colours distinguish it to the eye. Some of them are dull and melancholy, but the greater part agreeable. Those rays which have the greatest force make the most agreeable impressions, but their shining colours

very

very soon tire the eye. Those which form a green having but a moderate motion, are therefore capable of exercising the fibres of the eyes without weakening them. The brown and dark colours carry in them the image of sadness, because they leave the eyes in a state of inaction. Whatever strikes the sight with its colours, becomes still more pleasing by the greatness and variety of its parts. The vast extent of the ocean, the rivers which precipitate themselves from the high mountains into the low vallies, the fields which present to our view the most charming landscapes—all these objects are agreeable in proportion to the grandeur and variety of the images which are painted in the retina of the eye.

It is the very same with hearing as it is with seeing. We know, by observations which have been made, that the tympanum of the ear is composed of an infinite variety of chords, each of which has a particular spring. A sound is agreeable as it affects a greater number of those fibres with motions which have the nearest resemblance, and are oftenest united: on the contrary, a noise becomes troublesome to the ear, when the fibres clash and offend each other by the discord of their motions. Variety likewise adds pleasure to sounds: the most agreeable cease to be so, and become tiresome, when the action has been too long repeated upon the same fibres.

It has been imagined that words could

could in nowise be agreeable but by the ideas which they conveyed to the mind: but must we give up our own inward experience, and that of all mankind, to rely upon such authority? There are not only sounds which of themselves touch the fibres of the ear with pleasure, and others which tire them, but likewise the organs of speech are associated with those of the ear; and the nerves by which they are connected render their interest one and the same. Thus we cannot with pleasure hear those sounds that are pronounced with pain.

The agreement of tastes and smells is, in the same manner, as wisely adapted to our necessities as that of colours

lours and sounds. The sharp and pungent salts, if conveyed into the body in respiration or digestion, would produce diseases; and for this reason, they discover their malignant quality by the violence of their impression upon the nervous papillæ, which constitutes the tastes of tasting and smelling.

The medicines which physicians prescribe by way of cure have frequently very disagreeable smells, yet let us not be surprised at this. Health consists in the just proportion of those salts, sulphurs, and other principles, which compose our fluids; if any of them become predominant, or too much weakened, then sickness ensues; and in order to restore the equal balance, we are frequently

frequently obliged to have recourse to a remedy which to a man in health would prove a slow poison.

But there are certain universal medicines prescribed to us by the hand of Nature, which are necessary in all distempers, and almost sufficient to cure them: these are, a proper regimen, and the use of liquors capable of diluting, cooling, and restoring the natural state of the blood. When we stand in need of such remedies, our taste prefers them to those aliments which fatigue the organs of digestion, and produce pernicious juices.

The law which governs the impressions made upon the organs of the senses

senses likewise extends to the organs of perspiration. If the spring of the air, from which they derive their force, is weakened by scorching heat, they then fall into a languishing state, which is very sensibly felt, and a fresh breeze again restores them to their wonted activity.

By these observations, we perceive that there are two sorts of sensations, some of which (such as the pleasure we take in dancing and hunting) appear to proceed from the commands of the will, and seem in a manner to spring from the bosom of our faculties. These preserve the name of pleasing sensations. The others, which we call agreeable, are formed by the impression

ion or idea of beings which are foreign to ourselves. The soul then seems to launch beyond herself, in order to become acquainted with the amiable qualities of things presented to her view. Each of these sorts of sensations feel equally whatever exercises our organs without fatiguing them.

EXERCISE of the mind is as necessary as that of body, to preserve our existence. The senses of other animals being quicker than ours, are sufficient to direct them to whatever is agreeable to their nature, or to shun them if contrary thereto: but we are endowed with a mind to supply the deficiency of our senses, and pleasure presents itself to incite the mind to a proper exercise, and to keep it from falling into a state of fatal inactivity. Pleasure, the parent of diversions and amusements, is likewise the source of sciences and of arts: the whole universe is forced, by our industry, to pay tribute to our wants and desires; at the same time we cannot but

but acknowledge our obligations to the law of Nature, which has annexed a degree of pleasure to whatever exercises without fatiguing the mind.

There have been some men, and those called philosophers too, who have maintained that the exercise of the mind is in no other ways agreeable than by our having in view the fame and reputation which it was likely we should thereby gain: but surely our own inward reflexions are sufficient to convince us that we are often engaged in reading and contemplation without any future prospect, without any other design than that of passing agreeably the present hours. This exercise of the mind is so charming, that it sometimes

transports

transports the soul to such a degree, that she seems to have disengaged herself from the body. When we see a chess-player so much wrapped up in his own thoughts as to appear insensible to what strikes upon his ears or eyes, might we not then imagine him to be taken up with his own fortune, or the good of the state? Yet all this profound thought is only taken up with the pleasure of exercising the mind, which is procured by the proper placing of a piece of ivory.

It is owing to this exercise of the mind that we feel a pleasure arising from ironical satires, and satirical encomiums; hence, too, we are delighted with delicate thoughts, which bring to light

light a sentiment which is hidden in the recesses of the heart. In short, it is owing to the same cause that we are pleased with all those shining expressions which convey to us a just sense, notwithstanding there may appear to be an inconsistency in the terms. If we design only to instruct, then our style cannot be too clear; but if our intention is to please, then we may gratify the mind with an opportunity of exercising her penetration. The idea which we wish to convey will acquire a new degree of excellence, if, after the manner of Virgil's Shepherdess, there be some pains taken to conceal it, in order to afford the greater pleasure when discovered.

Order,

Order, symmetry, and proportion are agreeable, because they render it easy for the mind to comprehend and retain the different parts of an object.

Imitation by colours, sounds, gestures, or discourse, has the same advantages as symmetry or proportion: it presents to our view objects which the imagination can easily comprehend, by the comparison which is made with those already known to us.

Contrast is no less easy to be comprehended by the imagination than resemblance: it makes opposite objects to approach each other; it brings to light the characteristics of one, by comparing them with those of another. But if

contrast

contrast and resemblance have the same advantage, it may be asked whether they may be used indifferently? Certainly they cannot. Contrast is very successfully made use of in poems, pictures, and other works, wherein the parts are intended to be seen in succession; but in those designed to be taken in at one view, proportion ought to prevail in all the correspondent parts. The sight could not but be offended at a disparity, the reason of which could not appear to the mind. All great architects, among the different proportions compatible with the principal design of their works, have always fixed upon those which the mind could most easily comprehend.

As it is with the architect, so it is likewise with the musician. Numbers, which are easily compared, are those which best express the harmonious agreement of his composition; and the most pleasing sounds are those which convey to the mind the greatest exercise without fatigue.

Bold and elevated pieces of music please only the nicest connoisseurs in that science. By their exquisite taste they can with the greatest ease discern, amongst sounds seeming to disagree, a relation which escapes ears less refined.

Among all the different proportions, there is none which affords a more pleasing

pleasing contemplation to the mind than that perfect agreement of all the parts of a work with the ultimate end proposed therein. This is the chief of all the beauties; it is this which influences and presides over all the other parts, and they are to be looked upon as beauties or imperfections, according as they agree with this grand and principal design.

Poets follow the same maxim in the disposition of their images. They are not only careful to keep all the different characters in a state of subordination to the principal hero, but they likewise endeavour to make all the incidents with which they present us subservient to one great event.

We may, without doubt, comprise in a poem different fables, and place there, as in a gallery, a succession of various representations. Ovid followed this method: but several ages before his time, when poetry was yet in its infancy, Homer found out that it would be more agreeable to the mind to collect and introduce into one picture a number of actors, and make them all promotive of the same action. Upon this idea he first formed his plan of an Epic poem.

A considerable time afterwards, upon the plan of an Epic poem, Æschylus formed that of Tragedy, by the real representation of an event brought to light in all its circumstances. This famous

mous rival of Homer perceived that a dramatic poem would afford to the mind a still greater degree of charms, when one principal action connected all the scenes, and held them, in a manner, linked together in the memory. Moreover, Æschylus added the unity of time and place to that of action.

By the theory of sensation, it appears certain that the observing these unities is not a mere arbitrary rule, because there is a degree of pleasure annexed to whatever enables the imagination to form an exact representation of an object presented to her view.

However, we must acknowledge that as the pleasures which affect the

heart have the superiority over those of the imagination; therefore if the observing these unities was only to make the representation more easy to the apprehension, then indeed we might sacrifice this advantage, when, by so doing, we could make the scenes more interesting by the number and variety of incidents. But there is another circumstance which must be taken into consideration.

In dramatic poetry, whatever tends to make it less interesting must be looked upon as an imperfection; while on the other hand, whatever contributes to heighten the imposition on the fancy is highly agreeable. If an old man acts the character of a youth; if a young

young man puts on that of age; if the decorations represent the fields and country, when at the same time the scene is supposed to be in a palace, or if the dresses are not suitable to the dignity of the persons, then such disagreements become offensive. The case is the same, when the unity of time, place, and action is not observed. Let us suppose the principal action of a theatrical piece to be multiplied; let several ages pass away in the space of a few hours; let the spectators be transported, in a moment, from one part of the world to another: will not all these things appear as the highest absurdities, while at the same time they bring into our mind the fiction of the representa-

tion, and, as a voice, proclaim to us the folly of wasting real tears on feigned sorrows?

THE human soul is susceptible of love or hatred, and it is by these passions that we are attached to what seems to be our good; while at the same time we reject or fly from what appears to be the contrary. These are the two springs which put all our faculties in motion.

Hatred, and the passions which rise from it, are of necessity accompanied with a painful sensation, proceeding from the idea which we conceive of the evil which afflicts, or threatens to afflict. The infectious poison is conveyed into our very blood, and disturbing

the course of perspiration, diffuses a disagreeable impression through the whole of the human body. Nevertheless there is a sweetness which serves to allay this bitterness. The soul feels a pleasure in those passions which appear most suited to her present situation, and seems to have a tendency to destroy whatever threatens her. Such are the greatest part of our sensations. Pleasure and pain jointly make up the composition, which becomes agreeable or disagreeable in proportion as the former or the latter most prevail.

There are, at the same time, certain lively pleasures which are produced in the very bosom of hatred. The destruction of one's enemy appears to be

be the greatest of all blessings.—— There are even men, in whose eyes no object appears so charming as the downfall of a neighbour whom they accounted to be happy. The prosperity of another person increases the pain of their misery, and they are highly delighted when they see removed from their prospect what was offensive to their sight. Yet under all these malevolent pleasures there lies concealed a hidden misery, which is only somewhat softened, and the sensation for a time suspended. Thus every man who is of an envious and mischievous disposition is naturally of a melancholy and gloomy turn of mind.

All other motions of the heart, those

of fear or hatred excepted, are agreeable. Whatever we feel of compassion, friendship, gratitude, generosity, or benevolence, affords a pleasing sensation.

The influence of love and friendship is so great, that it even gives charms to sorrow itself. Has death swept off the object of your neighbour's highest affection, if you have any regard for his happiness, do not sport with his sorrow. He would repulse your unseasonable comfort, and break forth in the words of the Poet—

"My sorrows please me, and shall always do so,
Since to me it supplies the place of him
Whom I bewail."

It is then that the soul represents to herself

herself the idea of the person beloved in the most lively colours. She beholds, she enjoys, and this enjoyment, though imaginary, affords her real pleasure. A love of one's self being joined to this concern, contributes to make the grief still more interesting. We love to recal those sensations which have flattered us, and we applaud ourselves as having had merit to deserve them.

There have been devout visionaries who have attempted to render their minds so far abstracted, as to desire the continuation of their love for God, and the annihilation of that pleasure which they felt in loving him: but to take away pleasure from the idea of loving would be the same as if we were to take

away

away roundness from the idea of a circle. Love is purely disinterested, when we have in view no other advantage resulting but the pleasure which accompanies the act itself. The disinterestedness of the Christian ought to advance thus far and no farther.

If there have been divines who have imagined the soul to be capable of being wholly disinterested with regard to pleasure, there have been philosophers who have believed her unable to be swayed by any motives but those which took their rise from the prospect of self-interest. But in order to confute this notion, let us for a moment take a view of our public theatres. The shows there exhibited, though often calculated to debauch

the mind, yet are sufficient to convince us that she is formed for virtue. What mean our tears for unfortunate heroes? With what joy would we rescue them from their impending ruin? Whence comes this attachment? Does it proceed from the ties of blood or friendship? No, it does not: but they are men who appear to be virtuous; we have implanted in us the seeds of benevolence, which are always ready to spring up in favour of virtue, and incline us to humanity, when their growth is not obstructed by contrary passions. History furnishes us with the story of a Grecian tyrant, who, being present at the representation of Euripides's Hecuba, went out at the end of the first act, filled with a conscious

shame

shame when he found himself all in tears; by this means showing a tender feeling for the manes of the Trojans which he never had felt for his own countrymen: cruel when in pursuit of what seemed to be his interest, yet by nature formed for humanity.

Since the motions of the heart are agreeable where benevolence reigns, and only painful where hatred prevails, it is but reasonable to think that the ancients ought to have accounted those tragedies only to be defective which raised the misfortune of virtuous persons to such a degree as to kindle indignation; but not those, wherein solicitude for their fate is worked up to the catastrophe, and at last gives place to the joy of seeing them completely happy.

However,

However, we must so far agree with an ancient writer, that a strong regard for our own preservation makes us more ready to receive the impression of sorrow than pleasure; so that the soul more deeply interests itself with the misfortunes of a virtuous hero, than with his prosperity. His happiness no doubt would have given us joy; but by a certain magic power of tragedy, his very misfortunes affect us with a sort of pleasing sorrow, more agreeable than joy itself, because it affords a more lively exercise to our benevolence and humanity, the hidden charms of which are so powerful as to be able to convert grief into pleasure, and to render tears more agreeable than smiles.

But

But by what miracle is it brought about, that we should be so agreeably entertained with certain representations on the stage, while at the same time, had they been really performed before us, we should have been shocked with inward horror? It is owing to the different position of the object that we feel such different impressions. The more likely the misfortunes of others are to reach us, so much the more we dread their becoming personal; whereas those which tragedy presents us with are seen at a remote view: they do not alarm the love we bear to ourselves, they only excite the benevolent love which prevails within us in favour of virtuous persons.

Love retains something charming even in the want of the object of its desire. We always, in some degree, enjoy what we hope for; whereas we have not always the enjoyment of what we really possess. It is more pleasing to be carried by our wishes toward the least object, than really to possess the greatest advantages while the heart remains inactive.

Hope gives an agreeable prospect to the novelty of all the different sorts of happiness which we have in view.—Eager after pleasure, we flatter ourselves with the thoughts of obtaining it from all unknown objects which seem to promise the gratification of all our desires.

Truth

Truth herself is indebted to this secret hope for some part of her beautiful lustre. She often puts on a flattering appearance, attracting the mind by the pleasing hopes of success in a difficult inquiry, while she captivates the heart with the agreeable thoughts of possessing what is promised. But generally her principal charm decays when she becomes known to us. That pleasure which served to make us move chearfully when in quest of truth, at once vanishes when we have obtained that acquisition. Its real usefulness then constitutes the whole worth of it. Novelty loses a great part of her attractive faculty with regard to old people. They have learnt by experience to distrust her promises.

The pleasure of variety is next to that of novelty. Amongst a crowd of different objects presented to our sight, there are always some of them which offer somewhat new. Such is the excellence of variety, that it is often preferred to order or proportion. Is it not this which induces us frequently to quit the most regular gardens, and walk out in the fields?

In vain will great artists endeavour to flatter our eyes or ears with the most perfect imitations; for if they do not present us with an object which is interesting, the reward of all their industry will be but a feint acknowledgement of mere momentary admiration; and we shall highly condemn them for not exercising

ercising their talents in exciting the sensations of the heart, which are the only source of true pleasures.

NATURE has enlightened us with knowledge, nor has she confined this to the sensation alone of what passes within us. The qualities of others are likewise the objects of our knowledge, and they give pleasure or pain, according as they are agreeable or otherwise, to the existence of those who possess them.

We cannot help being seized with inward horror when we behold persons with broken limbs, troublesome excrescences, or of a cadaverous colour: on the contrary, a happy temperature of the blood is shewn by an agreeable colour of the complexion; and the organs which, without having any thing superfluous,

superfluous, possess every thing necessary for the perfect execution of their offices, are characterized by the agreeable turn of the features.

Beauty varies according to the different climates in which Nature has placed us. There is a beauty which shines in the Farnesian Hercules, as well as in the Venus of Medicis: it is even remarkable in the austere brow of Michael Angelo's Moses; so that for every age and every sex there is a peculiar species of ornament appropriated to every thing judged beautiful.

Some climates are not productive of regular beauties. There the idea of what is beautiful is not placed in what

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is really so, but in what has the least deformity.

The beauties of the imagination furnish us with an entertainment still more agreeable than those of outward figure; and unless we are touched with envy or hatred, we cannot, without pleasure, behold a lively penetration in another, which at once distinguishes truth from error; and we are charmed with a happy fancy which entertains us with interesting pictures. A graceful air strikes us more than the beauty of the body, because it is a transparent veil through which the mind may be observed. This gracefulness consists in the proper disposition of the attitude, the gesture, the movement

and the just expression of one's thoughts, and in adapting all of them to the end proposed. If the execution of our design is not too much laboured, but seems to be done in a natural and easy manner, this renders the whole still more agreeable.

The beauty of a lively genius, however sparkling it may be, is yet totally eclipsed by that of the soul. The most refined sallies of wit have nothing equal or to be compared with the lustre of those charms which are so conspicuous in a disinterested, benevolent soul. Our theatres will always resound with applauses in favour of the magnanimity of the high priest who had the fear of God, and no other fear; and mankind

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in general will applaud the humanity of Titus, who lamented the loss of all that time which he had not employed in making his fellow-creatures happy.

These native charms of the soul sometimes inspire us with a warm affection for the dead. How comes it that Plutarch, in his comparisons, has a power over us to that of much greater historians, so as to induce us to read him over and over again, and yet always imagine it to be the first time? It is because he there gives a sort of history of noble sentiments.

There have been some men, and those famous too for their knowledge of the human heart, who seem to have thought

that the pleasure which we take in the beauty of the soul is only a secret joy arising from self-love, when we behold such qualities in another as are favourable to our own particular interests. But in answer to this, we may venture to affirm, that a traitor appears infamous even to the very people whom he has saved by his treachery. A prodigal is ridiculous to the very man whom he enriches by his own ruin: on the other hand, a stranger whom we know nothing of, one that is dead, attracts our admiration from an act of virtue from which it is impossible we can reap any advantage; nay, it is not impossible, that while our enemy strikes a dread into us, we may at the same time be charmed with the greatness of his courage.

It is with the beauty of the soul as it is with that of the body; it distinguishes the qualities which are most suited to the existence of those who possess them. What can be more convenient for the weak state of man than by our benevolence to excite and engage others in our interest, to preserve a resolution in our greatest dangers, and to treasure up in our breasts a richness and greatness of soul which may render us independent of fortune?

But if it be true that the beauty of the body, as well as of the mind and soul, marks out the qualities which are most useful to those who possess them, whence comes it about that they likewise convey a pleasure to a soul which is an entire stranger to them?

Here let us admire the wisdom and goodness of our Creator.

If we turn our eyes upon the weakness of man in a state of infancy, when oppressed with infirmities, when in solitude, or worn out with years; if we consider his turn for arts and sciences, his fondness for esteem and applause, together with his desire of friendship and company—these considerations will point out to us that he is formed for society; that there are secret ties which unite him in the closest manner to those who surround him in life. Besides, in this situation it was of the highest importance that we should be able at once to discern those men whose correspondence might be useful to us, as well as those

those who might prove destructive. If we perceive a cadaverous colour in the complexion, an unhappy turn in the imagination, a dark and gloomy disposition, these qualities, fatal to those who possess them, and dangerous to those who approach them, shock us by their deformity, and are, as it were, the cry of Nature cautioning us to guard against an enemy who threatens us. On the other hand, a happy conformation of the organs, a delicacy of imagination, and a peculiar beauty of soul, by contributing to the happiness of those that possess them, may at the same time promote the felicity of those who have any communication with them. Fine features adorn those amiable qualities of the soul, and in a man-

ner promise that they may be useful to ourselves in the different circumstances of life wherein we may be placed. It is probably this beneficent care of Nature which has occasioned the contempt of those who, instead of acknowledging the hand of God in the beauty of the soul, have imagined that it sprang from the reflexions of self-love upon what might be for its own advantage; as if this strong impression which it makes upon us was not prior to all our observations.

The beauty of good morals, the greatest ornament of human kind, is nothing else but the beauty of the soul marked out in the conduct of life. If in the works of art the relation of the means

means to the end is sufficient to embellish them, what spectacle can be more agreeable than the relation of all the actions of a virtuous man or woman to an end suited to their talents, their condition, to the happiness of their fellow-creatures, as well as their own felicity? On the other hand, what deformity can be more offensive to the sight than to see friendship and justice given up as a sacrifice to self-interest? What more scandalous, than the debasing ourselves by the meanness of the objects which we pursue, or blindly giving up ourselves to the dictates of a rash presumption, or wavering to and fro in unsettled principles?

It is the united beauty of the soul and the imagination which conspire to form

that uncommon and valuable accomplishment faintly expressed by the term *urbanity:* it is a genteel politeness, which knows how to approve, without being fulsome, to give praise unmixed with envy, and to rally without ill-nature—which points out the foibles of mankind with a sprightly humour, unaccompanied by malice—which is able to throw the gravest subjects into the most agreeable dress, either by an ironical turn, or by a delicacy of expression. From gravity it passes to pleasantry, and employs an easy wit which affords a double pleasure to the mind, because it is not hidden or perplexed, while it leaves room for somewhat of conjecture, and gives a pleasing, joyful appearance to all the sentiments of virtue.

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The air of the face, and of the whole person, sometimes brings into one point of view all these different kinds of beauty. There is a certain analogy which the outward figure preserves with the qualities which characterize the moral dispositions of the soul and mind.

The happy conformation of the organs is denoted by an air of freedom and boldness; that of the fluids, by an air of vivacity. An air of delicacy is, as it were, a spark which proceeds from a fine imagination; an air of softness denotes delusive complaisance; a majestic air indicates a sublimity of sentiment; a tender sweetness in the air is a sure mark of a return of friendship.

All these different airs are agreeable, not only because of the qualities they express, but likewise by the sensations which they excite; and they become more or less so, in proportion to the secret relations which they bear to our particular dispositions.

Those animals which strike us by their beauty give us this agreeable impression, either from the brightness of their colours, or the gracefulness of their motions, and the sensations which they seem to express to us by their air.

HITHERTO I have confined myself to the consideration of those objects which of themselves are agreeable; but there are likewise others which become so merely by the relation which they bear to these first objects. Such is perfection.

Among all the goods of life which flatter us by the pleasing aspect which they put on, Perfection is the most valuable. It is, as it were, the standard of happiness, and there is a secret charm which accompanies whatever persuades us that we are in possession of it. But this idea, so interesting, is created by our own fancy out of the different materials

materials furnished by education, constitution, society, and our own reflexions. Generally we imagine it to consist of an assemblage of qualities foreign to us, which can be given or taken away by the caprice of fortune. How absurd is this mistake! But reason easily triumphs over it, and always predominates in men led by her dictates.

The chief end of all moral philosophy is to give us clear ideas relating to this point.

Perfection consists in the possession of such qualities of the body, mind, and soul as are calculated to procure our greatest happiness, in conformity to the intentions of our Creator, which

which are deeply imprinted in the very nature of our being. We arrive at a higher degree of perfection in proportion as the body is less distempered, and is capable of performing the motions allotted to it, according as the mind is less misled by error, and can with ease comprehend and set forth the beauty of truth. In short, we become more perfect in proportion as the soul is less depraved in her taste, and the more free she is from the seeds of envy, melancholy, and uneasiness, and the more she is disposed to regulate all her desires by a clear and certain judgment, the object of which is solid and lasting happiness.

But let us not confine this solid and lasting

lasting happiness to the limits of a few years. Inward conviction ought to convince every being, capable of thinking, that this principle is indivisible, and consequently immortal. The prospect of a future felicity ought always to be considered as the principal part of our present happiness.

It is from this idea of perfection that friendship borrows all her charms; though certain philosophers have imagined the source of it to be derived from our inability, without the assistance of others, to procure the necessaries of life. But if there is such a tie, which is only a mercenary traffic of interests, there is another, the object of which is much more noble. In this last

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we less consider advantages received from others, than the proofs we have of their perfection.

The charms of grandeur do not consist in keeping thought at a distance. The greatest pleasure attending that state consists rather in this—that all, with whom the great converse, are extremely assiduous to heighten and exalt the ideas they have conceived of their own persons and qualities.

Most of our vices sink and debase us, because they flatter us. We content ourselves with receiving from an appearance of perfection an inward satisfaction, which can only flow from real perfection. Weak, foolish mortals! an empty

empty shadow is sufficient to make the strongest impression on us! Whatever clothes itself with the outward form of srength, dexterity, or virtue, makes its way to us by the most endearing charms.

It is this chimerical perfection which gives so high a value to revenge. But pride, in order to flatter us, has no occasion to display to our sight the lustre of all our perfections. Whatever contributes to sink other men, at the same time raises us by the comparison which we make of their condition with our own. The faults and disgraces of others are matter of pleasure to us, unless they become objects of compassion. We have by nature a tender sympathy for

for the misfortunes of others, when they appear considerable: but if they are slight, then we love to enjoy this kind of superiority, which our being free from them seems to give us.

This, indeed, would be to banish all enjoyment from society, were we not to admit of that innocent raillery which with good humour exercises a sort of requisite justice upon the imperfections of others; but those are an unhappy set of mortals who can take a pleasure in being too severe upon the failings of mankind, for this malicious propensity has a real misery concealed under it. This is striving to be rich by the poverty and indigence of another.

It is with our perfection as it is with every thing else which is capable of proof: it is proved to us not only by the evidence of our own sensations, but likewise by the authority of others.

We cannot help wishing for the approbation of those among whom we live, and this we do independently of any motive of interest. Self-love will scarce presume to vindicate itself, unless it has the concurrent approbation of others. This fondness for esteem is naturally proportioned to the extent of our abilities. An elevation of genius, and greatness of soul, prompts a man to look for an acknowledgment of the excellency of his judgment from men of all climates and all ages. It is true, indeed,

indeed, we may say of the wise man, (if there be any worthy of that title,) what the most ancient writer of tragedy has said of one of his heroes—"Content with being really praise-worthy, he cares not whether he has the praise or not."—But even this man is not quite free from the desire of glory; he only carries it a degree farther than the rest of mankind; he aspires at having the approbation of God himself.

The esteem of others not only flatters us by the favourable idea which it gives us of our personal qualities, but because it persuades us that others consider our happiness as making part of theirs. So great is our connexion and dependence upon each other, that there is not an individual

individual in society who is not able to disturb our felicity, though there are more who incline to procure and increase it. What can be happier for us, in our weak state, than to perceive in all around us an universal inclination to favour our wishes?

But if the esteem of others has in itself no allurement, but according to the happiness which it promises, how comes it that we should procure it by the sacrifice of our lives! History has immortalized such Greeks, Romans, and Chinese as have devoted themselves to certain death, without any other motive than that of exchanging this life for the praises of posterity. How strange it is, that men who had no

notion

notion of a future state should run to meet their destruction to procure such a happiness!

This heroic principle flows from a secret hope that flatters us with the prospect of enjoying reputation, which will even reach us when laid in our graves. A confused notion of immortality prevails even among those who have not a clear idea of this truth. But there is still another consideration: it is very possible that these illustrious persons may have been more happy in their death than they would have been, had they enjoyed life longer, as they were admired by their friends and countrymen, and persuaded that they should be so by posterity, nay, even by their very enemies,

enemies, and mankind in general. This crowd of admirers, to a lively imagination, forms an object so delightful, and which, though of short duration, appears more valuable than a long succession of sensations which, though agreeable, have an alloy of bitterness and chagrin.

Those qualities which distinguish us from others are not the only ones which flatter us. Whatever shews the perfection of our species makes a pleasing impression upon us.

The grandeur and variety of objects, as well as sublimity of thought and sentiment, seem to derive the greatest part of their charms from the conviction

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they afford us of the greatness of the human genius; and if the representation of an object appears more pleasing in a picture than it does in a pond, the reason seems to be, because the image reflected in the water only flatters our sight; whereas the art of painting or statuary, as it were, breathing life into the canvas or marble contributes to heighten our vanity and self-love, by a reflexion which indeed ought rather to mortify us, when we behold what wonders one man does, which another is utterly incapable of.

So far I have endeavoured to find out the source of pleasure in the soul, and the organs of sensation. According to their different modifications, there are always others in the brain which are familiar and proportional to them, the traces of which are retained by the memory. Is there any possibility of unfolding this mystery? for it is here, especially, that Nature seems to have covered herself with a veil, which mortals, I am afraid, will never be able to remove. But if we cannot flatter ourselves with the hopes of arriving to a true knowledge in this point, let us not, however, despair of guessing a little, since, when experience fails us, conjecture

ure is always ready to assist us with her light.

We cannot observe Nature without perceiving that a rich simplicity reigns through all her laws. We may form a notion, then, of the impression which is made upon the brain, by that made upon the organs of the senses, which are, as it were, the extensions or branches of it. An object which is agreeable exercises the fibres of the brain, without weakening or exhausting them; on the other hand, whatever is displeasing wounds them, and whatever tires them leaves them in a state of inactivity.

It is not only from the degree of mo-

tion in the fibres of the brain that this pleasure springs, but it chiefly arises from the relation which the motions imprinted there bear to each other.—The theory of music teaches us, that the most pleasing harmony is that where the vibrations which compose it oftenest unite. This has induced the greatest natural philosophers to believe, that those colours, smells, and tastes, which, being mixed, are agreeable, excite in the organs of sight, smell, and taste, certain vibrations which agree and correspond with each other. Are we not, therefore, authorized to conjecture, that symmetry, rhyme, proportion, imitation, and that just relation of certain means to a determined end and principal object, and in a word, the pleasures which

charm

charm us most, either in the works of nature or art, make, at the same time, agreeable impressions on the brain, because they produce ideas which are closely connected, and assist each other.

But whence comes it that we feel so grateful an impression from those qualities which constitute the beauty of the body, mind, or soul, when at the same time we do not perceive their hidden relation to utility, which constitutes their real worth? The source of this pleasure certainly flows from the wise contrivance of the Author of Nature, who has formed us in such a manner, that notwithstanding that self-love which creates misunderstandings among men, yet they are members of the same

body. Their happiness, as well as their misfortunes, are common, unless obstructed by their particular dispositions. Persons of delicate constitutions cannot behold others with fractured limbs without feeling the same part of their bodies affected with the wounds inflicted on their neighbours; and though this impression may not be so sensibly felt by robust persons, yet in some degree they too will feel it.

Painful sensations are not the only ones which diffuse themselves by a sort of contagion, since we find, from experience, that a sprightly humour, and gaiety of disposition, likewise communicates itself to those who come into our company.

It is therefore evident that the beauties of the body, the imagination, and the soul make a pleasing impression on the spectator, because they excite in his brain a motion which tends to communicate them to him, and will succeed too, if not opposed by particular dispositions.

It has been said that geometry has the chief direction in the formation of the heavens; and we say of harmony, that she has been the chief directress in the construction of our brain. What raptures, what agitations are not excited by certain tunes? How much are we inspired with the love of dancing by music? How wonderful its power in the cure of certain distempers? This

exercise of the brain, which so nearly resembles that of the chords of an instrument, plainly evinces that our brains are in reality a kind of instrument furnished with chords, composed of a number of nervous fibres of different tensions, and consequently susceptible of an infinite variety of vibrations.—They communicate their motions by the assistance of the eyes and ears; and this they do more easily, in proportion as they contain a greater number of chords, which act in concert together, or as the chords of some are more strong and able to move than those of others.

There are souls which at once attract each other with greater force than the loadstone

loadstone does iron; and nothing can surpass that facility which those who love each other have in communicating their ideas. Their brains seem to be tuned in unison.

There are others to whom Nature seems to have given a sort of sovereignty over the rest of mankind. By this means men of this class sometimes reduce men of the greatest courage, as well as the most powerful princes, to the most abject state of slavery. It was the force of this charm which enabled Mahomet to overturn the constitution of Arabia, which he new-modelled at his pleasure. History informs us, that his dependents soon imbibed his sentiments. The fibres of their brains,

susceptible of a similar and equally lively agitation, easily excited a similar sensation in the brains of those with whom they conversed.

But from mechanism does it proceed, that the vibrations of the fibres of the brain have a power to transmit themselves to that of another person? The ingenious hypothesis of M. de Mairan, upon the communication of sounds, throws some light upon this mystery. —Sounds reach us because there are certain fibres in sonorous bodies, together with parcels of air, the fibres of the ear, and lastly, those of the brain, which form a continued chain of chords which communicate their motions to each other. Since the motions of the body,

body, the colour of the face, and the disposition of the eye point out to others the particular state of our minds, may we not, with some reason, conclude that there is a chain with chords in unison, which convey from one brain the vibrations of the fibres of another?

It is from this secret relation which the dispositions of our brains have to each other that sympathy arises, and all our whimsical tastes, which cause us to find out a particular pleasure in certain objects that others are entire strangers to. What pleases us most is not always what is most entitled to do so. Is one seized with a deep melancholy, then they only love dark and gloomy places,

where joy never approaches. No object makes a more pleasing impression than that which excites in the fibres of the brain such vibrations as correspond with those of the soul. These are sensations which yield her a peculiar satisfaction.

A new-born infant appears to be the most insignificant creature in the universe; nevertheless it is the most charming of all objects, especially to those that gave it birth: yet this particular pleasure is not attached to the identical person of the child. It is only in poems and romances that we find instances of a discerning instinct of the parent; for in reality, the most affectionate mother will hug as her own son one who has been put in his place!—It appears

appears then that the tenderness of parents derives its source from the peculiar formation of their brain, the structure which is so admirably contrived that they cannot, without an ecstacy of pleasure, behold the fruit of their love, formed of their own substance, which becomes to them a loving subject which nature has put under their laws, from whom, when worn out with age and infirmities, they have a right to expect that succour which they gave to its helpless infancy—who is destined to inherit their name, their fortune, nay, their very ideas and affections.

In order to finish this slight sketch which I have given concerning the physical

sical nature of sensations, I shall at present endeavour to trace out that particular part of the brain which is the seat of pleasure and pain, which receives the impression from neighbouring objects, and consequently acts upon our organs. —This part must have solidity and strength, since the characters imprinted there cannot be worn out for a space of years. This nervous membrane must hold and touch the extremity of every nerve pertaining to sensation, in order to receive all the different impressions of it: it must, at the same time, have a power over the origin of every nerve subservient to motion, to be able to communicate such motions as are suited to the vibrations which it feels. All these different marks seem to be united

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in the membrane called by anatomists the *pia mater*, which includes the whole mass of the brain, is strongly adherent to it, and by a number of foldings and duplicatures produces a great many folded waving partitions, which penetrate into all the adjacent parts, and make their way into all the different seats of the brain.

All agreeable sensations may be reduced to two different classes. One consists of the bounties of nature, which convey pleasing sensations antecedent to all reflexion, among which may be accounted not only the pleasures of the senses, but likewise those of the heart and imagination; the beauty of the body, the mind, and the soul, and all that variety of agreeable objects which shine throughout the works of nature and art. They are joined to whatever exercises the organs of our faculties, without fatiguing them. It is to these organs that we are indebted every moment for our preservation; and it is of the utmost importance to us that pleasure should distinguish whatever tends

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to promote this exercise of the fibres and motion of the fluids.

The other class is made up of those sensations which arise from our manner of thinking, and cease upon the change of our ideas. One man aspires at independency; another consents to obey, because by this means he expects to arrive at command. One person takes a pleasure in hoarding up riches, which become useless to him, whilst another loves to squander away the estate which was necessary to support him in life.—This influence which our thoughts have over our pleasures is the chief characteristic of the human species.

At our first setting out in life we are generally

generally bent on the pursuit of the particular sensations which are agreeable to us; but in a little time, being instructed by experience, we find that there are pleasures which follow pain, as well as pains which follow pleasure. This makes us aspire at having sensations truly valuable, and acquiring qualities which we esteem most. Thus we form ideas of happiness and perfection which blind us to every other advantage. The faculty which we possess of applying these two important ideas to various objects proves often destructive; yet it would have been doing a signal prejudice to man to have made him insensible to the impressions which they make upon him. They comfort us in misfortunes, they inspire us with resolution to

encounter

encounter difficulties, and they strew flowers in the path they invite us to pursue: to them we are indebted for our purest pleasures, all that contributes to the happiness and glory of society, the arts and sciences, and all the virtues—nay, even our very preservation. Animals need only lay hold of the nourishment which is offered them, but man grows up in the most excessive indigence, without raiment, without shelter, and almost without any other aliment than what is the fruit of his labour. The surest resource which we have is by reflecting on the time past, to be able to make provision for futurity. The ideas of perfection and happiness are the springs which move us to this

this necessary foresight, and consequently should employ all our different faculties.

HAVING attempted to explain the laws of sensation, I shall now notice something pretty singular—that is, the diversity of tastes which all flow from the same source. We may venture to say, that the northern and southern nations, those who are separated but by an arm of the sea, or by a ridge of mountains, nay, men and women born in the same family, will have quite different pleasures. What to the eyes, ears, and minds of some will be pleasing, is to others a punishment.

The diversity of the organs is the cause of this. Thus it is that an eye of tender and delicate fibres prefers violet to

to an orange colour. Why? because violet is a colour consisting of weaker rays; while orange is preferred by those whose eyes are of a more solid and stronger substance.

Sounds that are offensive to a delicate people are not so to a rougher nation.

Nature has perhaps more diversified our brains than the organs of our senses. Thus among the people of the south, an agreeable declamation ought to be more animated than those of the north, because it must be suited to a more lively sensation.

The bounds or extent of our knowledge are likewise other causes for the strangeness of our tastes.

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Some are struck with the beauties which really exist in an object, whilst others yield to the impression made by the privation of some beauties in it.

The Egyptians chiefly admired grandeur in their works of architecture; the Goths were fond of variety. Our great architects have neglected neither of these beauties, but they have had the art of joining both of them together, and forming an agreeable proportion.

As it is with architecture, so it is likewise with music. Some regard only bold and lofty pieces of music; others, again, are most pleased with an exact imitation of nature; but a great musician admits both sorts into his compositions.

sitions. He has the art of giving such a proper softness to the most jarring sounds, as to cause them to produce the finest harmony: but what he chiefly aims at is to raise sensations, and he thinks he has not arrived at the perfection of his art till he knows how to master the soul as well as flatter the ear.

Happy are those nations where men of such surprising abilities start up, who can discern and make use of all these different sorts of beauties, and unite them together in a just proportion!—We may say that Nature with a scanty hand has sown such geniuses at a remote distance from each other, in the course of ages. Their works, which

are founded upon the finest taste, likewise infuse the same delicacy into a whole people: they become the standards of comparison; and it often happens that an object, which before attracted our admiration, loses all its charms, and grows insipid—according to the Italian proverb, "That the greatest enemy to any thing that is good is what is best."

Bring some warm water to two men, one of whom we shall suppose to be full of heat, the other pierced with cold; the same water will feel warm to the one, and cold to the other. The laws of sensation are the same in both, but the standard of their comparison is different; the one forms his judgment of

the quality of the water from the cold in his hand, the other from the heat of his.

The dispositions of the heart likewise raise a difference in our tastes. Envy, that gloomy lover of the dead, hates the living, and causes artists to depreciate each other. On the other hand, if the rival is not cotemporary, or of the same country with us, then he escapes the darts of envy.

Ambition likewise is sometimes concerned in deciding the glory of artists, as well as that of their works. The Romans only esteemed those talents which enabled them to become leaders in the Commonwealth, or to triumph over

over the neighbouring nations; so that those same pictures and statues which struck a Grecian with admiration, appeared to a Roman quite low and insignificant. Such is the effect of those passions which possess the soul, that they throw an air of ugliness and deformity upon whatever is not suited to the end which they pursue.

Sometimes too it happens that our religious principles have an influence over our tastes. A pious Mussulman looks upon the most perfect statues to be as so many dangerous idols.

As soon as mankind came to a knowledge in anatomy, they perceived that the size and strength of each muscle was in proportion to that of the bone to which it was joined.

The Epicureans, in answer to this, say, that these muscles were not different in their nature, and that those which had the most exercise became the most brawny; in the same manner as those men who undergo most labour are generally most robust. This is the low refuge of atheism, and the only one too. Galen with ease showed the falsity of it: he made it evident that infants, taken out of the mother's womb,

womb, had these proportions discernible in them as well as the most active wrestlers.

The different sorts of agreeable sensations furnish us with proofs for the being of a Deity.

They are distinguished by natural characters, to impute the cause of which to a blind chance would be the highest absurdity.

How comes it that in the productions of art the relation which all the parts bear to the end gives us no pleasure, till we are fitted for it by instruction? while at the same time, by a secret charm which is prior to all our reflex-

ions, we are at once made sensible of the beauty in the structure of man, animals, and plants? Can we believe that the Author of Nature is himself ignorant of what he reveals to us? Can we deny intelligence to the Creator of the universe, who has surrounded us with such a number of agreeable beauties, which are as so many characters engraved by his bountiful hand, and serve to mark out to us that secret relation which is kept up between man and all other parts of the creation.

These characters are more or less distinguished according to the importance of what they declare to us. Among all the objects which are presented to our senses, there are none which make a more

more agreeable impression than a fine face: but the most exact and regular features do not touch us so much as the beauties of a fine genius; while these, again, are greatly eclipsed by the superior splendour of noble actions and sentiments, which discover a truly greatness of soul.

The beauty of the body has the advantage of being always before our eyes, whilst that of the mind and soul does not show itself but at particular times: but whenever these different objects are presented to us, and that passion does not hinder from a proper view of them, then the pleasure arising will be according to that disposition and order which I have taken notice of; and

thus it is that experience confirms what Nature teaches us—that the beauty of a sprightly wit entitles more to happiness than that of the body, while at the same time it is greatly inferior to that of the soul. Sometimes it happens by our particular dispositions, that the beauty of the body makes a more lively impression than that of the mind or soul. Then it is an allurement which invites us to procure a sort of immortality. The Author of Nature looked upon the preservation of our species to be an object more worthy of his care than the personal advantage of any individual.

That same wisdom which has thus distinguished the beauty of the body, the imagination, and the soul, has likewise

wise diversified their motions; those of the imagination being more agreeable than those of the body, while they, on the other hand, are greatly inferior to those of the soul.

Besides, there is still another difference in our pleasures, which proclaims aloud that there is an intelligent power. Agreeable smells, the charms of music, oratory, geometry, architecture, history, and the pleasures of a select company—all these are of such a nature, that the enjoyment of them gives pleasure, while the being deprived of them gives no real pain. They are not supplies to our necessary wants, they are only graceful ornaments, which serve to enrich and increase our happiness.—

What numbers of people are utter strangers to them, and still enjoy a life of tranquillity! Even those who are most sensible of these pleasures can part with them for others. It is not so with other sorts of agreeable sensations. Thus, for instance, the law of nature, which invites us to nourish ourselves, not only rewards us for our compliance, but punishes us if we do not obey her call. The Author of Nature has not thought it sufficient to entice us, by a particular pleasure, to be careful of our preservation, but he incites us by a more powerful motive, which is pain.

His bountiful care is manifest, even in the different duration of these various sensations. Those which affect our sight,

sight, our hearing, the imagination, or the heart, as well as those which accompany a moderate exercise, seem to be always before us. They fill up life, without being prejudicial to health.—It is not the same with that pleasure which is annexed to nourishment. Had it gone farther than the satisfying Nature, then an immoderate use of the most wholesome food might have become the most deadly poison.

Among all the pleasures, there are none more remarkable than that of a new-born infant. How is it to be successfully nourished? In vain would Nature have furnished the mother's breast with milk, had she not enabled the child to extract this useful liquor.—

The infant, as yet incapable of any other exercise of its faculties, pleases itself with moving its cheeks and lips in such a manner as that it affords a passage into the mouth for the nutriment, when offered, the pleasant taste of which becomes a new incentive to renew those motions. It passes away the beginning of life either in sleep, or in the enjoyment of the only pleasures which it can feel; so that this infirm being, which at first seems to be in a state of misery, in reality lives amidst a succession of agreeable sensations.

The same Being who is author of our happiness is likewise of our pains.

In relation to the Author of the laws of

of sensation, two questions, and those very different too, may be asked—Is he intelligent? Is he beneficent?—Now if we do not consider these two questions separately and distinctly, or if we deny him to be an intelligent being, because he may not have been beneficent in proportion to our desires, this would be offering a violence to the first laws of the art of thinking. Let us not, then, confound these two questions, but examine them apart.

We know, by experience, that there are blind causes such as have no design, and likewise intelligent causes, which pursue an ultimate end through all the different parts of their works. We distinguish them by the nature of their productions,

productions, since the exact relation which all the parts bear to the principal end is the characteristic of an intelligent cause. This just relation shines conspicuous through all the laws of sensation. Pleasure and pain equally contribute to maintain our preservation. The one serves to point out what is most agreeable to our nature; the other makes us know what is prejudicial.—There is a certain pleasing impression which marks out such foods as are proper to be changed into our substance, while hunger and thirst put us in mind that perspiration and exercise make a considerable waste in our bodies, and how dangerous it would be to delay long the reparation of this loss. Let us suppose, for a moment, that we had no

painful

painful sensation to give us notice of our present or future evils, we should then perceive that the want of this pain would soon make way for death.

There are nerves extended through the whole of our bodies which serve to inform us what is good and what hurtful to us. The painful sensation is in proportion to the force of what hurts the nerves; so that, according to the greatness of the evil, we make so much the more haste to remove the cause and seek the remedy.

It sometimes happens that pain does not precede our evils, but at once advances with our ruin. Nothing, then, which surrounds us can retard its approach.

proach. It is with the laws of sensation as it is with motion. The laws of motion regulate the succession of those changes which happen in bodies: in the same manner the laws of sensation regulate the succession of changes which happen in animated beings; and those pains which appear to us of no use are oftentimes necessary consequences which flow from the circumstances of our situation. But though these different laws may in some particulars appear to be of no use, yet it is a less inconveniency than it would be to suppose them continually liable to change, since this allows no fixed principle capable of superintending the management of men or animals. The design of these general laws is not to make all individuals immortal;

mortal ; it is only to preserve the different species. Now it is evident that the laws of sensation, as well as motion, are perfectly calculated for this preservation. Those of motion, in all places, and at all seasons, furnish the various sorts of animals with whatever is useful or necessary: those of sensation point out whatever is agreeable to their nature, and invite them to look out for such, while they instruct them in whatever is prejudicial, and oblige them to remove and keep at a distance every thing of this sort.

What a depth of understanding must there be in the Author of Nature, who in a manner so simple, yet so full of variety, continually changes the scene of the

the universe, yet in general preserves it the same!

The laws of sensation not only conspire with the works of the whole universe in proclaiming that there is an intelligent cause, but what is more, they likewise prove to us the beneficence of this great Governor of the world.

His bounty is made manifest by the care which he has taken to provide for us, not only what is necessary, but also what is convenient and agreeable; and this care of his shines forth in all the laws of sensation: and we may here very justly observe, that in such impressions of objects, or exercises of our different faculties, as are in any degree

suited

suited to prolong our existence or raise our perfection, the Creator has bestowed pleasure with an open hand. To strengthen this observation, I appeal to those pleasing sensations which flow from painting, sculpture, architecture, and all the objects of sight. It is the same with music, dancing, poetry, eloquence, history, geometry, as well as all the sciences, the diversions, and employments of life: so it is, too, in friendship, affection, and in short all the motions of the body, mind, and heart. Such is the extensive goodness of the Deity, that he seems to have been liberal, nay profuse, of all those pleasures and agreeable sensations which were consistent with his divine wisdom.

It has been said of Admiration, that she was the daughter of Ignorance; but when we survey the works of Nature, and behold such marks of art and dexterity, we cannot help being filled with admiration, which generally rises in proportion to our knowledge.

A Deity so infinitely intelligent ought to attract our admiration; a Being of such unbounded goodness ought surely to raise in us gratitude, and engage our confidence and affection.

Epicurus, by endeavouring to confute the existence of a God, thought he did well in attempting to disprove a power

power that seemed to be an enemy to our happiness: but why should we form this false idea of a Being, who has not only given us different tastes, but surrounded us on all sides with agreeable sensations—who has furnished us with a variety of faculties, and contrived them in such a manner, that the exercise of them is accompanied by a pleasure which tends to our preservation?—Are the goods offered to us to be the less esteemed because they are the presents of a supreme and intelligent Being? Ought they not to be accounted rather more valuable, since they are the pledges of his goodness towards us?—In short, when we consider the power, the wisdom, and goodness of God, ought we not patiently to submit to the

afflictions

afflictions with which he visits us, and contentedly to bear the loss of blessings which he thinks proper to deprive us of? Nor ought we to murmur against the laws which he has prescribed to us.

Shall we pretend to rebel against a power that is infinite? No—let us not heighten our misfortunes by exerting our utmost, but vain efforts against the hand of Omnipotence.

Desire is fed by hope, but dies when there is no possibility of attaining its object. Is there any man in Europe who can be so unreasonable as to complain that he has not been seated on the throne of the Great Mogul?—Let us not torment ourselves with fruitless desires,

nor

nor be out of humour about the want of any thing which is not a part of the happiness destined for us; let us look upon the acquisition of such to be as impossible to be obtained as the kingdom of Asia.—If we submit ourselves to the power of the Almighty Creator, then we have the inward satisfaction to know that if we were admitted into his councils, we should applaud the motives of his laws, and be highly delighted with the reasons of his conduct.

The universe, according to Epicurus and Spinoza, séems to be nothing but a motley assemblage of works proceeding from a blind cause; but to men of virtue, it is a magnificent temple inhabited by a beneficent Deity, who has communicated

municated to them a part of his design, and has displayed to them the wonderful works of his wisdom; who profusely bestows upon them whatever is necessary, useful, or agreeable; and to all the blessings which he has bestowed upon them he has likewise added the prospect of a happiness as lasting as himself.

The duties prescribed by moral philosophy, in regard to ourselves, may be reduced under two heads—to know how to set a just esteem upon the goods which are offered to us, and to bear our misfortunes with resolution.

There was a sect of philosophers who seemed to wish to intend to extirpate all pleasures. Their schools resounded with nothing but the austere lesson of "Abstain from pleasure." But why so, since Necessity herself in a manner obliges us to enjoy them, either when we quench our thirst or satisfy our hunger, or when we open our eyes or ears? We cannot help feeling pleasure in our

employments as well as amusements—in solitude as well as society. Are we, then, to despise those blessings so connected with life? Ought we not rather with grateful hearts to rejoice in the possession of them?

But further, I affirm that pleasure springs from the bosom of Virtue. An inward satisfaction never fails to accompany every employment that is suited to our abilities and condition.—Relaxations are most agreeable when produced by labour and exercise.—Among all the descriptions presented to us by history or tragedy, none are more delightful than those in which the beauty of the soul shines forth with all its lustre. A friendship which arises from

from virtue excites the most lively pleasure; and amidst all the pleasing advantages which proceed from a friendly affection, there can be none of a higher degree than that which makes us fix our esteem upon the most deserving qualities of the person who is the object of our love, which reconciles our tastes, unites our views, and renders our interests mutual.

Virtue is far from excluding pleasures; she only takes pains to give the preference to those which are most worthy.—Here a question of no small importance occurs, *Whether the pleasures of the senses be superior to those of the soul?*

To determine this point, let us sup-

 pose

pose them separated from each other, and thus carried to the utmost summit of their perfection; let us suppose that a being, insensible of the pleasures of the mind, should taste those of the body, throughout its whole duration, and being destitute of all knowledge, remember nothing of those pleasures which it has felt, nor foresee any which it is to enjoy. Thus being shut up, as it were, in a shell, all its happiness consists in a sort of deaf and blind sensation, which affects it only for the present moment.—On the other hand, let us suppose that a man is insensible to all the pleasures of the senses, while he enjoys all those of the mind and heart; that in a life of solitude, history, geometry, and the polite arts exhibit to his sight all

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the richness of their treasures, and while in this retirement, continually give him fresh proofs of the force and extent of his mind; or if he lives in society, that friendship and glory, the natural concomitants of virtue, continually furnish him with new instances of the grandeur and beauty of his soul; and by his strict adherence to reason, that a secret satisfaction always reigns in his heart, which nothing can disturb: methinks there would be but very few men, who have any notion of the pleasures of the mind and body, who, if they had these two different sorts of happiness placed before them, would prefer the state of an oyster to that of a divinity.

lively when they are the remedies of pain. Is it not the degree of thirst which determines the degree of pleasure we feel in quenching it ?

All that is exquisite in sensual pleasure is derived from the mind or soul. Without their assistance it soon cloys and grows insipid.

In fine, the pleasures of the body have nothing of duration but in proportion as they borrow it from our wants ; and as soon as they are supplied, they become principles of pain. The pleasures of the mind are then greatly superior, had it no other advantage than that of being better suited to fill up the void spaces of life.

But

But among all the different sorts of pleasures, whether they be of the body or mind, to which must we give the preference? The testimonies of all men give the pre-eminence to those which flatter our self-love most. Whence comes it that we are more offended at contempt than hatred? It is because it gives us more pain to have our perfections called in question, than to be threatened with the loss of any other possession.

It is this idea of perfection which has rendered the Indians insensible to the horrors of burning themselves alive; it is this which has hurried men headlong into the jaws of death, charmed with the prospect of immortal fame by such heroism. It is a sort of idol, to which, in order to wipe off an affront received, we

oftentimes sacrifice our country, our repose, the highest employments, and even life itself. In fine, love itself, which seems to depend entirely upon the senses, is indebted to fancy for the most refined pleasures.

All those things which agreeably flatter us are not equally valuable. To aim at gaining the esteem of others without having our own inward approbation, is in reality the same thing as if we were to be contented with being sick, provided only we had the outward appearance of being in health. Nature has not trusted it to reason alone to declare to us this important truth; and though she has annexed a particular pleasure arising from the marks which others give us of

their

their esteem, yet she has at the same time fixed a blemish on those who claim public praise as their due. Does she not seem to be a little contradictory? For why should she make it disgraceful to require esteem, while she prompts us to seek for it by the pleasure which attends it? In this let us not blame the conduct of Nature, but rather admire her wisdom. She informs us, by the voice of our inward reflexion, that public esteem is a sort of recompence due to virtue, but that it ought not to be the motive. To be over-fond of the esteem of others is, in effect, a kind of proof that we have not our own inward esteem. Let us then first seek the approbation of an upright conscience, which hatred or calumny cannot deprive

us of, which will one time or other be followed by the esteem of others, and is always accompanied with the approbation of God himself.

Let us not allow ourselves to be dazzled by the flattery of a false judgment. Behold that man who appears so melancholy and dejected: he imagined that grandeur consisted in a numerous train of attendants; by this means he thought his being aggrandized. A reverse of fortune forced him to retrench half his retinue; he is insensible to all other happiness which remains, and is become perfectly miserable by the loss of what was really useless. Turn your eyes to that other person, who possesses so much wealth, and is arrived at such

such a pitch of grandeur. This man measured his happiness by the tenderness of his wife, or by the favour of his prince: his darling pleasure has been snatched from him, the loss of which has made such a chasm in his heart, that the horror of it has tainted all other blessings which surround him.

It is true that these phantoms of perfection proceeding from an imagination transported either by ambition or love, may sometimes produce a transitory pleasure more lively than that short and durable joy which accompanies reason. But this fleeting sensation is of the same nature with that which makes drinking more agreeable in a fever than in health. It supposes a distemper in the soul,

from whence arises an uneasiness in the pursuit of the object of desire, disgust in the enjoyment, and despair in the privation.

It is not only in the external testimonies of perfection that we find a sort of happiness, since it also consists in the consciousness of possessing it.

But amidst all these agreeable enjoyments which offer themselves, are we entirely to give up to those which are attended with the greatest pleasure?—No: the same sensations, too often repeated, soon blunt the sensitive faculty. Loathing and distaste issue from the very bosom of pleasure; so that what a little before gave us the most ecstatic joy

joy becomes the object of our aversion. How then are we to defend ourselves against such formidable enemies? We can do it in no other way than by diffusing a variety through all that employs our faculties, for this gives an air of novelty to the objects of our taste.—The pleasures of the mind, and those of the body, rest and motion, solitude and company, relaxations and serious employments, all these acquire new charms by succeeding each other, and their variety produces the same effect in life as the difference of concords in harmony.

In our different faculties we have a hidden store of valuable seeds, which become dead if not properly nourished; but they spring up and flourish, if assisted

sisted by the culture of arts and sciences. The more these are brought to light, the more we are furnished with preservatives against the assaults of our passions, as well as expedients to make life agreeable.

A certain Poet, by way of allegory, mentions that Jupiter had opened, at the foot of his throne, two fountains, the one of pleasure, the other of pain, and according to his will mixed these two liquors, and thus determined the happiness or misfortune of each man, in proportion to the nature of the mixture. May we not, with some propriety, apply this fiction to the different kinds of agreeable sensations? The idea of our perfection, and the successive exercise of

of our different faculties, are two sources continually flowing with different pleasures. A wise and beneficent Being mixes these precious liquors in equal proportions in favour of the man of wisdom, and pours them out incessantly upon him.

Let us not, then, place our chief happiness in riches and grandeur. There is no state of life wherein it is not in our power to form a chain of agreeable sensations, by procuring to ourselves a series of virtuous exercises, and keep our faculties in action without tiring them. Those alone are happy in possessing the goods of fortune who can be happy without the possession of them. In reality that man enjoys true

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and solid happiness who confines his desires within the circle of real wants, and grasps at nothing out of his reach: but as soon as the human heart goes beyond those limits assigned by nature, it loses itself in an immense field, where fortune sports by the airy bewitching phantoms exhibited to it; and when once things are brought to this situation, we shall find no bounds sufficient to stop the rapidity of our desires.

Health, a keen appetite, and strength of body, seem to be the portion of indigence. Besides the pleasures of the mind, friendship and affection, tranquillity of soul, joy, and inward satisfaction, are oftener found in a middling station than in the retinue of princes.

—What

—What, then, are the chief advantages of wealth and grandeur? They consist in having our self-love flattered by the magnificent structure of our houses, the richness of our furniture and equipage, and the power we have of lording it over others. We may certainly be happy in these advantages, but we are greatly to be lamented if we stand in need of these deceitful marks of perfection. They are like perfumes or concerts—to enjoy them is agreeable, but it is the greatest misfortune in the world not to be able to bear the want of them.

Wisdom not only banishes melancholy and chagrin, but secures us against that pain which in good constitutions generally

generally arises from excess; and when she cannot absolutely prevent it, at least blunts the edge of its impression, which requires strength in proportion as there is less courage to oppose it.—— A Grecian general, famous for having made one of the most glorious retreats, assures us that the same degree of fatigue is not so hard to the general as to the common soldier. The vanity of the former carries half the burthen; the latter bears the whole upon his shoulders. The Indians have shown a chearfulness in the midst of the most exquisite tortures. To such a degree have they got a mastery of their minds as to be liable to divert their attention from the situation which gives them pain, and fix it upon some idea which

which flatters them. Is it impossible that reason and virtue should learn from ambition and prejudice in the same manner to weaken the impression of pain by agreeable sensations?

THERE are two other species of maxims, in the observance of which the happiness of mankind is not a little interested. The former are, as it were the fundamental laws of society. Were these to be universally broken through, all men would be involved in one common misfortune. Such are those which compose what is called the law of nations—to do injury to no one, and to fulfil the engagements you have entered into.—It is unjust, and declaratory of our enmity to mankind, to infringe those laws, unless when the interest of the public gives us a sanction so to do.

The second are those maxims which are

are less the basis than the ornaments of society. Though they are not absolutely necessary to support it, yet they procure it all the perfection of which it is susceptible. Such are those which command us to succour those in distress, and contribute all that lies in our power to promote the happiness of our neighbours. If we observe these rules, then we shall be beneficent, and in a manner become the tutelar deities of our fellow-creatures.

These different maxims are comprised in this Gospel precept—love your neighbour as yourself—that is, be just and beneficent. This is what morality enjoins us to perform, and the theory of sensation advises us to the same.

The

The victims of injustice are not the only sufferers: as a serpent, it begins tearing the person in whose bosom it is harboured. It owes its birth to an immoderate desire of riches and honours, and produces uneasiness and discontent. If the unjust man should flatter himself that he may escape the vengeance of men, or the justice of God, yet surely this he must lament, that he has placed his perfection or happiness in such a fleeting possession of objects which depend upon the will of others, and lie at the disposal of capricious fortune.

Pride and interest not only subject our happiness to things without us, but by waging a secret war on all around us, sow in our hearts the seeds of general

neral hatred, which weaken or stifle those of benevolence and friendship.—Now if it be true that every degree of benevolence is a pleasure, that sorrow itself is accompanied with a secret satisfaction, when it arises from benevolence, and that every effect of envy or hatred is attended with pain, our happiness must be so much the more complete and solid, as the conduct of life is calculated to inspire us with the sentiments of love and benevolence, and to remove those of hatred or ill-will.

The habitual practice of justice and benevolence not only makes us happy by the motions excited in our heart, but still renders us more so by the sentiments

ments which are inspired into those who keep us company.

The Author of Nature, who has been so careful in furnishing us with such tastes as are suited to our preservation, has likewise implanted in us two different desires in regard to others, that of being feared and that of being loved.

In the state in which mankind were before the establishment of civil laws, it was perhaps more important, and consequently more agreeable to be feared than loved, because fear is a better defence than love against those whom interest or ambition have armed against us.

us. Thus amongst sovereigns, who, with respect to each other, may be considered in this state, it is often less agreeable to be loved than dreaded by the neighbouring powers. The case is quite different with individuals: the laws are the guardians of their property their honour, and their lives. What does it signify to them to be feared? but it is highly important, and consequently agreeable to them, to be loved. The love of others is often of great service to us, and is always accompanied with marks of esteem and friendship, which are generally more pleasing than the very services done us. It has been said of praise, that it is to the person to whom it is offered the most pleasing of all music; and we venture to affirm

that there is nothing more agreeable to the mind than to be beloved.

It is by justice and benevolence that we procure this satisfaction. Pride and injustice cause dislike. If weak and impotent, they become the objects of contempt: if joined to power, then they are hated by us. They aim at establishing happiness on the ruin of others: whereas virtue, by reconciling our own happiness with that of others, makes our private advantage their common good. We may form some notion of this, by that interest which we cannot help having in favour of those virtuous persons produced in tragedy upon our theatres.

It is true, indeed, that the appearance of virtue may produce this effect, as well as Virtue herself, but we cannot say of her what has been said of Love: it is almost impossible to make the counterfeit pass current for any length of time. The only way to appear just and benevolent is really to be so.

Let us suppose a man who, being hated by all his acquaintance, hates them equally in his turn. All the objects offered to his sight become offensive to him, and the motions excited in his heart give him pain. On the other hand, let us consider the just and benevolent man, who rejoices in the love and esteem of all who know him! his life is one continued act of benevolence,

and all the objects presented to him become agreeable. The motions raised in his heart are so many pleasures. Such certainly is the state of those happy mortals who are placed in the regions of bliss, and whose minds are continually busied in the exercise of benevolence, which was their delight here below, whilst upon earth; and even then yielded them a sort of recompence for their virtue, by that satisfaction which attended the practice of it.

Nothing is more uncommon to be met with than a man perfectly unjust or perfectly benevolent. Between these two extremes there lies a vast ocean, where the greatest part of mankind fluctuate. The more our hearts are given to hatred the nearer we approach to complete misery;

misery; and the more we have of benevolence, the nearer we arrive at perfect happiness.

But it may be said, how can we avoid hating those who hurt us in our interest or reputation? We must own an attempt of this nature difficult, yet what should we have a greater regard to than our happiness? And can we obtain it if we indulge hatred in our hearts? Let us only be as ingenious to extirpate it from our breasts, as we are often in vindicating and maintaining what is right.

May it not happen that those who we complain of may have founded their conduct with respect to us upon very

good reasons? Why then should we hate them, since their behaviour has been such as our own would have been, in the like situation? Nay, even though they unjustly attack us, we ought only to lament their misfortune in harbouring within their breasts a sure principle of pain and uneasiness. They ought to be considered as sick persons, who, in a violent fever, imagine they shall cure themselves by wounding every one that comes in their way. Let us guard against their fury, but let us not punish ourselves by giving way to passions which ruffle and disturb the quiet of our souls.

Besides these sentiments of humanity which we owe to mankind in general, there

there are likewise particular duties arising from the several stations wherein Providence has placed us. They may be reduced to this general branch—to behave to our superiors, equals, inferiors, and neighbours, as we would they should do unto us, in like circumstances. Let this be the rule of our conduct; and if we are careful strictly to fulfil those duties, it will be a means to procure us the esteem as well as the affection and confidence of all our acquaintance, and must kindle in them the warmest sentiments of benevolence towards us.

Among all the duties which arise from the various connexions in life, there are none which have more the ap-

pearance of being beyond human nature than those of perfect friendship. It requires us to give up our dearest interests in favour of our friend, and to regard him as the most valuable part of ourselves. However, there is no source more abounding in agreeable sensations than the accomplishment of those duties which appear so difficult, and even to be sensible to have a capacity to perform them is a very exquisite pleasure.

There have been some eminent authors who have maintained that in the intercourse of friendship we have more to lose than we can gain. It is, say they, a sort of extension of ourselves which exposes us to misery, not only in our own persons, but in those of others also.

also.—To think in this manner betrays, in my opinion, a total ignorance of the power of love. Virtue is of such a nature, and the interest which true friends feel in what affects each other, is so peculiar, that it multiplies their joys and diminishes their sorrows; nay, even in the mutual sadness of friends there is diffused a sort of pleasing sensation which they would not part with for the most lively pleasures.

But if it be true that benevolence alone makes us happy, how comes it about that the generality of mankind seem prone to injustice and hatred?—The principal cause of this distraction is the false impression which riches and grandeur make upon us. By the delu-

sive splendour which frequently conceals a real misery we often make a mistaken estimate of supreme felicity; and nstead of exercising our faculties, and conducting ourselves toward others in such a manner as to inspire us with sentiments which are accommodated to our natrue, and suited to our happiness, we are impatient to obtain an unbounded measure of things which in themselves are not necessary, and are only made so by our fantastical way of thinking; and we sacrifice every thing which proves an obstacle to those unlimited desires.

Riches, pleasure, and health become evils when we know not how to make a proper use of them. Wisdom alone, to speak with propriety, deserves the name of goodness, since by her means misfortunes frequently become happiness, while, on the other hand, those things which we account the greatest happiness turn out quite the contrary. It is, in my opinion, too degrading to Virtue to make her principal business consist in being a guard to her rivals, riches, pleasure, and health. Virtue removes from us all painful sensations, and excites in us those which are of the most agreeable nature. Sorrow at what is past,

repining at what is present, and anxiety for futurity, are the greatest scourges of the human race; but virtue, guided by wisdom, defends us from them, by confining our desires, by making them conformable to reason, subjecting them to the laws of our Creator, and placing our perfection on realities, not in the possession of wavering, fleeting objects, but in the proper exercise of our faculties, such as are suited to our present condition. Spleen and discontent spread their infection even to the very throne, but they dare not approach Wisdom. She even often wards off diseases, which are generally the fruits of intemperance: she debars us not the pleasures of the senses, but offers them in all their purity and innocence; and they become

agreeable

agreeable in proportion as we stand in need of them. The pleasures of the mind follow in her train, nor do they abandon her even in solitude and adversity.

Whenever a virtuous man or woman turns their thoughts upon God, mankind in general, or their friends and neighbours, in particular, they perceive motives of secret joy; they conform themselves to the design of their great Creator—live worthy of the regard of all their friends and acquaintance. Such characters, entirely free from hatred as well as fear, live in the continued exercise of benevolence, or, in other words, in the enjoyment of the most agreeable sensations; and thus all the different

different kinds of agreeable sensations are united in favour of wisdom, and being combined in proportions regulated by their vivacity, duration, and agreement, they form the most delicious of all harmonies.

But the greatest of all blessings which the virtuous man enjoys here below is at the hour of death, which opens him a passage into a more happy life.—Death brings him into the presence of a beneficent Being whose laws he always regarded, and whose goodness he has often experienced.

If it be true that hope is in itself an agreeable sensation, and this in proportion to the greatness of the good which

is

is the object of it, there cannot be upon earth a more delightful situation than that of a man or a woman who, feeling a present happiness in virtue, have in death a noble prospect of perfect felicity opened to them.

I have been giving the picture of the wise man, when perhaps such a one does not exist; but we shall be more and more happy as we resemble this portrait. There is in morals, as well as in arts, a certain idea of perfection which artists ought to endeavour after, though they can never hope to attain it.

I need not dread the ridicule of those who pretend to give laws to their superiors, if, after having pointed out the sources

sources of happiness, I observe that they flow equally to empires as to private persons. This is a speculation which too much interests the human species to be forbidden to any one who has a mind to amuse themselves with it.

The greater part of mankind make their happiness to depend upon others: even when they are at the height of grandeur they often aim at being happy under the title of suppliants. It is almost impossible that those who have it in their power to determine their lot should always gratify their desires.—The heart of every human being is a sort of vortex, the centre of whose motions is its own private happiness. But if we expect that our happiness should become the common centre of others, this would be desiring a perfect change in their nature. This would be as absurd as to consent that our happiness

should depend upon a miracle; therefore let us demean ourselves in the best manner that is possible to our neighbours, but let us not expect to be truly happy but by gratifying the dispositions peculiar to our nature.—I call that a happy condition of life, in which the agreeable sensations are greater in number to those which are painful. They are divided into three different classes, according as the propensities of the body, the mind, or the heart predominate.

If we were disposed to bring together a set of men truly to be envied for their happiness, it would be in vain to look for such in the highest stations of life; but we should find them among those who subsist by moderate labour, and by

by this means earn a sufficient competency for themselves and families. We soon perceive that such mortals live most free from anxiety, uneasiness, and spleen, and inwardly possess a secret fund of joy. Their life is not so full of noise and show, but more safe and quiet; and though there may be some pleasures which they are deprived of, yet they enjoy a great many more which those in a higher sphere of life are strangers to.

The impressions made on the body are less agreeable than those made upon the mind. One kind of life will, then, be more agreeable in proportion as it is attended with more exercise of the mind than labour of the body. What can be more

more pleasing than to enjoy all seasons, all places, and nature in general? A happiness so exquisite as this has fallen to the lot only of a few extraordinary persons. It is a sort of sanctuary, the gates of which Ignorance has shut up for several ages from the greatest part of mankind. She has blasted the flowers of knowledge in private men, while she has ennobled injustice in conquerors.

Since it is from the heart that the most agreeable sensations flow, hence we may conclude that to be the happiest sort of life where benevolence most prevails. Those to whom Fortune has been most lavish in her favours cannot taste the true sweets of her bounty

bounty unless they feel a benevolent disposition to serve the rest of mankind. Their true happiness is to be measured by the number of their fellow-creatures whom they make happy.

What can be equal to the happiness of that prince or princess who do not confine their benevolence within the narrow circle of courtiers and flatterers which surround them, but enlarge their views, and make the influence of their bounty extend to all their subjects, in order to procure them all the blessings of life. They banish misery from the state, they give life to arts and sciences, and encourage men of genius and virtue. By this method they make plenty reign through their dominions, which tends

tends more to increase their revenues, and multiplying their people, than the most extensive conquests.

It is true, perhaps, in this train of virtuous sensations there may not be any so keen or lively as those of a conqueror, whose ambition is flushed with victory; yet the conqueror purchases this pleasure by running the risk of becoming the most unhappy of all men, because he is more liable to have his taste depraved by the principles of hatred, as well as by trouble and anxiety.

To conclude.—Let us, in a series of employments suited to our talents and condition, seek for the small portion of happiness which we hope to attain in this lower world.

Let us not place our perfection in things which are out of our power.

Let us live in such a manner as to carry in our hearts the sentiments of benevolence, and banish from our breasts all hatred, melancholy and discontent.

In short, it is only necessary that we should

should be capable of loving and hating, to be convinced that our lives will never be happier than when we find our hearts warm with sentiments of benevolence.

It is not, then, with moral Philosophy as it is with other Sciences: there is no mystery which she is not ready to disclose to all those who are capable of the least degree of reflexion.

THE END.

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